

Guaifenesin

This sheet is about exposure to guaifenesin in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare providers.

What is guaifenesin?

Guaifenesin is a medication that is an expectorant. Expectorants are used to thin and loosen mucus in the throat and lungs. This process makes it easier to cough up and remove the mucus from the body. Guaifenesin can be found in over-the-counter cough and cold medications.

Sometimes when people find out they are pregnant, they think about changing how they take their medication, or stopping their medication altogether. However, it is important to talk with your healthcare providers before making any changes to how you take your medications. Your healthcare providers can talk with you about the benefits of treating your condition and the risks of untreated illness during pregnancy.

I take guaifenesin. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

Based on the data available, guaifenesin is not expected to make it harder to become pregnant.

Does taking guaifenesin increase the chance for miscarriage?

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Based on the data available, it is not known if guaifenesin increases the chance for miscarriage.

Does taking guaifenesin increase the chance of birth defects?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Most studies suggest that guaifenesin is not associated with an increased risk of birth defects over background risk.

Does taking guaifenesin in pregnancy increase the chance of other pregnancy related problems?

Based on the studies reviewed, it is not known if guaifenesin can cause other pregnancy-related problems, such as preterm delivery (birth before week 37) or low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth).

Does taking guaifenesin in pregnancy cause long-term problems in behavior or learning for the baby?

Based on the data available, it is not known if guaifenesin can cause behavior or learning issues.

Breastfeeding while taking guaifenesin:

The use of guaifenesin while breastfeeding has not been studied and it is not known if guaifenesin can cause problems for a baby that is breastfeeding. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a male takes guaifenesin, could it affect fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?

Use of guaifenesin has not been studied for effects on sperm in relation to fertility or affecting a partner's pregnancy. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have does not increase risk to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet on fact sheet Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/>.

Selected References:

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